

Welcome to the Green House

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Welcome to the green house.
Welcome to the hot house.
Welcome to the land of the warm, wet days.

There are no doors in the green house,
yet strong lianas bar the way.
There are no windows in the green house,
yet ropey vines frame the views.

There are no wooden floors in the green house,
only fallen leaves,
and white rootlets,
and fungal threads.

There are no walls in the green house,
only the giant forest trees.

There is no roof in the green house,
only the canopy of leaves,
where the sun and rain
poke through narrow slots;

where the slow, green-coated sloth

and the quick-fingered capuchin
make their slow-quick ways
from room to room
in the green house,
in the dark green,
light green,
emerald green,
bright green,
copper green,
blue green,
ever-new green house.

But it is not all green
in the hot green house;
a flash of blue hummingbird,
a splash of golden toad,

a lunge of walking lizards,
a plunge of silver fish,

a slide of coral snake through leaves
a glide of butterflies through air,
past crimson flowers,
past showy orchid bowers.
everywhere color threads through
spreads through the hot green house.

And this is not a quiet house,
not in the day.

With the *a-hoo, a-hoo, a-hoo*
of the howler troop
welcoming the dawn;
with the *crinch-crunch*
of long horned beetles
chewing through wood;
with the *pick-buzz-hum-buzz*
of a thousand thousand bees
droning over flowers;

with the high *chitter-chitter-rrrr*
of the golden lion tamarin
warning off intruders;
with the *kre-ek, kre-ek, kre-ek*
of keel-billed toucans
feeding on ripe, sweet figs;
with the *sniff-sniff-sniff*
beneath the fig tree
where the wild pig picks
through the fallen fruit.

This is not a quiet house,
Not even in the night:

with the *chirr-chirrup*
of chorusing frogs
from limbs and logs,
from trunks and leaves,
from the water's edge,
from the rocky ledge,
welcoming the dark;

with the *kwah-kwa-kwa-kwo*
of the boar-billed herons
fishing in the river;
with the *whup-whup-whoosh*
of the fluttering bats
flying through the evening air;
with the *twitter-ee, twitter-ees*
of the kinkajous
calling from the tops of trees,

alert for the soft *grrrrrrrrroooooowl*
of the ocelot
on the prowl
for its next meal.

This is a loud house.
A bright house.
A day house.
A night house.
A wet house.
A warm house.
A single and
A swarm house.
A monkey house.
A fish and bird and
bee house.

Welcome to the green house
and the hot summer days.